

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 SSO-00 SS-20 PA-04 PRS-01 USIE-00

NSC-07 NSCE-00 SCSE-00 SCA-01 SY-04 SCCT-02 USSS-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 RSC-01

SP-03 AID-20 OMB-01 EB-11 DRC-01 INRE-00 /143 W

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3595

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL ASMARA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS ATHENS 3319

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, ET, CASC

SUBJECT: TENNECO SEVEN: PRESS STATEMENT

STATE FOR BRUCE ROGERS AF/ET

ADDIS ABABA/WYMAN: PLEASE NOTIFY

REYNONDS/CANADIAN EMBASSY

THERE FOLLOWS TEXT OF PRESS STATEMENT RELEASED THIS AFTERNOON
ATHENS BY TENNECO CHAIRMAN FREEMAN:

QUOTE

JUNE 1, 1974

IN ATHENS, GREECE, THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT WAS MADE TODAY BY N.
W. FREEMAN, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TENNECO INC. OF HOUSTON,
TEXAS:

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WE LEARNED FROM TENNECO PEOPLE IN ETHIOPIA THAT THERE IS GREAT

LOCAL CONCERN OVER THE MURDER OF A MISSIONARY NURSE. THE KIDNAP OF AN AMERICAN MISSIONARY NURSE AND A CANADIAN PILOT AND THE HOLDING OF FIVE HOSTAGES FOR OVER NINE WEEKS HAS CAUSED SUCH GREAT CONCERN AMONG THE VARIOUS MISSIONARY GROUPS OVER THE SAFETY OF THEIR PERSONNEL THAT TWO MORE MISSIONARY HOSPITAL PROJECTS IN ERITREA PROVINCE HAVE BEEN CLOSED.

THE MISSION HOSPITAL IN GHINDA WAS CLOSED ON MAY 28 AND ON THE SAME DAY THE SUDAN INTERIOR MISSION CLINIC AND THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AT AFEDED WAS ALSO CLOSED. THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AT AFABED INCLUDED THE BUILDING OF A DAM, AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, WELL DRILLING, AND SCHOOLS FOR THE PEOPLE OF THAT AREA.

IT WAS LEARNED TODAY THAT A HOSPITAL AT HAICOTA NEAR TESSENEI WHICH WAS OPERATED BY THE MIDDLE EAST GENERAL MISSIONS, AS WELL AS A CLINIC IN MASSAWA WHICH WAS OPERATED BY THE RED SEA MISSION, HAVE ALSO BEEN CLOSED AS A RESULT OF THE MURDER, KIDNAPPINGS, AND FEAR FOR THE SAFETY OF THEIR PERSONNEL.

THE MISSIONARY COUNCIL ADVISE NO CONSIDERATION FOR THE REOPENING OF THE ABOVE INSTALLATIONS WILL BE GIVEN UNTIL THE HOSTAGES, BOTH AMERICAN AND CANADIAN, ARE RELEASED SAFELY AND QUICKLY BY THE ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT AND ALSO THERE MUST BE A GUARANTEE FOR THE FUTURE SAFETY OF ALL FOREIGN PERSONNEL.

AS A RESULT OF THIS AND IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE E.L.F HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL FOR OVER TWO MONTHS, MR. FREEMAN ANNOUNCED THAT HE WAS REMOVING THE TENNECO NEGOTIATING TEAM FROM ASMARA, ETHIOPIA.

FREEMAN WAS IN ATHENS TODAY TO REVIEW TENNECO'S EFFORTS IN OBTAINING NOT ONLY THE RELEASE OF THE SIX TENNECO HOSTAGES BUT ALSO THE RELEASE OF THE AMERICAN MISSIONARY NURSE.

FREEMAN FURTHER STATED THAT TENNECO HAD COMPLIED WITH EVERY WISH THAT HAD BEEN RECEIVED FROM THE E.L.F. BUT THE E.L.F. STILL REFUSED TO RELEASE THE HOSTAGES.

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ON MONDAY, MAY 27, 1974, IN COMPLIANCE WITH AN E.L. F. REQUEST IN THE FORM OF A LETTER, A HELICOPTER OWNED BY A CANADIAN COMPANY WAS DISPATCHED TO A RENDEZVOU POINT TO BRING OUT SOME OR ALL OF THE HOSTAGES.

FREEMAN STATED THAT WHEN TENNECO COMPLIED WITH THE E.L.F REQUEST AND DISPATCHED THE HELICOPTER, THE E.L.F. NOT ONLY KEPT

THE HELICOPTER AND PILOT, BUT KILLED A DUTCH MISSIONARY NURSE AND USED THE HELICOPTER TO KIDNAP AN AMERICAN NURSE.

THE DUTCH NURSE WAS MISS ANNA STICKWERDA, WHO WAS 54 YEARS OF AGE AND DEDICATED TO HELPING THE ERITREAN PEOPLE. SHE WAS IN THE PROCESS OF PERSONALLY LEADING A GROUP TO BUILD AN ORPHANAGE AND SCHOOL IN GHINDA OF THE ERITREAN PROVINCE OF ETHIOPIA. LAST SUMMER, MISS STICKUERDA RETURNED TO HOLLAND AND TOOK WITH HER TWO YOUNG ERITREAN CHILDREN. SO GREAT WAS HER LOVE FOR THE PEOPLE.

OVER TWO THOUSAND VILLAGERS ATTENDED THE FUNERAL OF MISS STICKWERDA WHO WAS BURIED IN THE COURTYARD OF THE HOSPITAL. VILLAGERS HAVE MAINTAINED AN AROUND THE CLOCK VIGIL AT THE GRAVE AND THEY KEEP FRESH FLOWERS AROUND THE GRAVE.

THE UNANSWERED QUESTION IN GHINDA IS "WHY"?

MRS. DEBORAH DORTZBACH, THE AMERICAN NURSE, IS 24 YEARS OLD AND IS FIVE MONTHS PREGNANT. MISSION PERSONNEL ADVISED FREEMAN SHE WAS IN POOR HEALTH AND THEY FEARED FOR HER LIFE. HER YOUNG HUSBAND MAINTAINS A TEARFUL SURVEILLANCE IN ASMARA AWAITING WORD OF HER RELEASE.

FREEMAN STATED FURTHER THAT THE E.L.F. HAS CONSISTENTLY MAINTAINED THAT IF ANYONE OF THE TENNECO HOSTAGES BECOME ILL, HE WOULD BE IMMEDIATELY RELEASED. TENNECO HAS NOW BEEN INFORMED FROM THEIR SOURCES THAT ONE OR MORE OF THE ORIGINAL FIVE TENNECO HOSTAGES IS ILL; YET NO ATTEMPT HAS BEEN MADE BY E.L.F. TO RELEASE SUCH HOSTAGE.

AFTER TWO AND 1/2 MONTHS OF TRYING TO NEGOTIATE WITH E.L.F. FOR RELEASE OF THE HOSTAGES, FREEMAN STATED, "THAT WE STILL DO UNCLASSIFIED

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NOT KNOW WHAT THEY WANT OR WHY THEY CONTINUE TO HOLD THE HOSTAGES".

FREEMAN EXPRESSES HOPE AND APPEALS TO THE E.L.F. FOR THE IMMEDIATE AND SAFE RELEASE OF ALL OF THE HOSTAGES.

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